**TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

MEETING MINUTES

January 10, 2024

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| Town Offices  24 Depot Road  East Kingston, New Hampshire  6:30PM | Robert Caron, Chair  Joseph Cacciatore, Vice Chair  Robert Nigrello |

Board Members present: Joseph Cacciatore – Vice Chair, Robert Caron – Chair and Robert Nigrello.

Others Present: Town Administrator Grace Ruelle, Police Chief Clayton Jervis, and Fire Chief Ed Warren.

Chairman Caron called the meeting to order at 6:33pm with the roll call.

**APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS**

***#1. Meeting Minutes***

The Board reviewed the December 27, 2023 public and nonpublic session I and session II meeting minutes.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to approve the December 27, 2023 public and nonpublic sessions I and II meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

The Board reviewed the January 3, 2024 public session meeting minutes.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to approve the January 3, 2024 public session meeting minutes; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***#2. Accounts Payable Check Registers***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, accounts payable check register dated January 8, 2024 in the amount of $56,313.24.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to approve and sign the accounts payable check register dated January 8, 2024 in the amount of $56,313.24; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, accounts payable check register dated January 8, 2024 in the amount of $31,745.47.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to approve and sign the accounts payable check register dated January 8, 2024 in the amount of $31,745.47; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***#3. Payroll Registers***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, the payroll check register dated January 5, 2024 in the amount of $35,159.10.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to approve and sign the payroll register dated January 5, 2024 in the amount of $35,159.10; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***#4. Police Special Detail***

Chairman Caron presented, for board review and questions, police special detail payroll register for the period of December 18 through December 28, 2023 in the amount of $4,455.00.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to approve and sign the police special detail payroll check register for the period of December 18 through December 28, 2023 in the amount of $4,455.00; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***#5. Employee Change Forms – Police Department and Fire Department***

Board members reviewed the employee change forms submitted by the Police and Fire departments reflecting the salary changes for the newly appointed Police Chief (Jervis - $102k) and the rate of pay for the newly appointed police officer (R. Geary - $33.08 per hour) and the address change for a member of the Fire Department (J. Vincent).

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to approve and sign the Employee Change Forms as presented for the Police and Fire departments; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***#6. Tax Map Maintenance Contract***

Town Administrator Ruelle presented the annual contract from CAI Technologies to update the town tax maps which are completed on an annual basis. Updates are generated by way of Planning Board approvals for subdivisions, lot line adjustments, and voluntary lot mergers which are then recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to approve the contract with CAI Technologies to update the town’s tax maps; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

***#1. Finalize Budget***

Chairman Caron noted the Fire Department budget was the only department budget not yet finalized. Chief Warren presented another draft budget reflecting changes made to the year-to-date calculations (through November 30th as he did not have time to include the December numbers), part-time payroll line, info and technology line, and telephone line), all resulting in a decrease of $14k over the previously proposed version. He stated he also provided explanation information at the bottom of the spreadsheet justifying the department’s budget. He acknowledged the department went over budget in 2023 and noted this over expenditure didn’t include the $18k of required items that were not completed in that year.

Discussion ensued on the information technology, telephone, cable services, EOC shared budget items, heating costs due to a poorly insulated building, part-time payroll line projections as they relate to the underspent 2023 budget line, duplicated part-time payroll lines (Fire/Ambulance), new stipend employees, and reducing the budget by an additional $2k.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to accept the Fire Department’s proposed 2024 budget less $16k which would reflect an additional reduction of $2k from the previous version; seconded by Chairman Caron.**

Discussion: Chief Warren stated he would be amenable to reducing the part-time payroll line by an additional $2k thus proposing a total of $163k. This reduction would bring the proposed 2024 bottom line budget number of the Fire Department to $367,840.00.

**VOTE: The motion passed 3-0-0.**

It was noted these changes to the Fire Department budget would result in a proposed 2024 bottom line number of the town’s total budget of $3,685,008.67.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to accept the town’s proposed 2024 budget in the amount of $3,685,008.67 (rounded to $3,685,009) and to move this budget forward to public hearing; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***#2. Finalize Warrant Articles***

Board members reviewed each of the warrant articles below, took recommendation action, and requested additional information about each be provided so they can provide background and current balance information to the public during the upcoming public hearing and deliberative session.

***ARTICLE 1:***To choose all necessary Town Officers for the year ensuing.

No action of the board is required.

***ARTICLES 2-6:***Zoning Amendments (#2 Accessory Dwelling Units, #3 Home Occupation, #4 Floodplain Development, #5 Building Inspector and Permits, and #6 Building Code).

It was noted that these articles may not be amended as the language is prescribed by law.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to recommend the proposed zoning amendments as presented; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 7:*** Shall the Town of East Kingston raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling $3,685,009 Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be $3,685,009, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of East Kingston or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. This operating budget article does not contain appropriations contained in any other warrant articles. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

The budget increase from the 2023 ACTUAL budget to the 2024 PROPOSED budget represents an estimated tax impact increase of $0.40 per $1,000.00 of assessed value.

The motion to accept this budget during the previous finalizing budget discussion shall serve as the board’s recommendation action (3-0-0) on this article.

***ARTICLE 8:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-six thousand dollars ($26,000) to conduct a revaluation and authorize the withdrawal of twenty-six thousand dollars ($26,000) from the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund created for that purpose. No amount to be raised by taxation. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxation.

Discussion ensued on the money to be spent on the revaluation process in 2024 and the funding sources (CRF, raise and appropriate, and 2024 budget).

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to recommend Article 8 as presented; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 9:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars ($15,000) to be added to the existing Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund established at the 1991 Town Meeting for the purpose of the next revaluation of the Town, as required every five years by NH RSA 75:8-a. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in an estimated $0.04 increase per $1000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxation.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to recommend Article 9 as presented; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 10:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand dollars ($50,000) to be added to the existing Building Preservation Capital Reserve Fund established at the 1993 Town Meeting for the purpose of the preserving Town owned buildings. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance and no amount to be raised from taxation. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxation.

Board members noted they would like to maintain a balance of $100k in this capital reserve fund.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to recommend Article 10 as presented; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 11:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars ($15,000) to be added to the existing Police Department Building Long Term Maintenance Costs Capital Reserve Fund established at 2016 Town Meeting for the purpose of funding long term maintenance costs for the Police Department Building. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in an estimated $0.04 increase per $1000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxation.

It was noted the current balance in this fund is $30k.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to recommend Article 11 as presented; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 12:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars ($10,000) to be added to the existing Police Department long term Equipment Replacement fund established at the 2016 Town Meeting for the purpose of funding long term equipment replacement costs for the Police Department. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

Noting the current balance of this fund ($51k) and the lack of need to purchase equipment in fiscal year 2024, Chief Jervis stated he would have no objection to removing this article from the warrant.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to eliminate Article 12 from the warrant; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 13:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars ($10,000) to be added to the existing Library building maintenance expendable trust fund established at the 2010 Town Meeting for the purpose of funding long-term maintenance. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in an estimated $0.03 increase per $1000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxation.

It was noted this article is based on the Library’s capital improvement project plan.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to recommend Article 13 as presented; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 14:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand dollars ($50,000) to be added to the existing Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund established at the 1999 Town Meeting for the purpose of acquiring fire apparatus. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in an estimated $0.12 increase per $1000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxation.

The current balance of this fund is $384k. Chief Warren noted the tanker is next on the schedule for replacement with a projected cost of $700k and that this warrant article was reduced to $50k from $65k.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to recommend Article 14 as presented; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 15:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand dollars ($15,000) to be added to the existing cistern hydrant repair/replace Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2018 Town Meeting for the purpose of repairing or replacing existing cisterns or hydrants. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in an estimated $0.04 increase per $1000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxation.

Chief Warren noted this fund should maintain a balance of $125k-$150k (current balance of $96k) and that they anticipate spending $40k-$50k in 2024.

**MOTION: Vice Chair Cacciatore motioned to recommend Article 15 as presented; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 16:*** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand dollars ($10,000) to be added to the existing Fire Department/Emergency Operations Center Land &/or Buildings Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2012 Town Meeting for the purpose of the acquisition of land and/or buildings or construction of building for a Fire Station/Emergency Operations Center. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED.

This article would result in an estimated $0.03 increase per $1000.00 of assessed value to be raised by taxation.

It was noted the balance in this fund is $110k.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to recommend Article 16 as presented; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

***ARTICLE 17:*** On the petition of John Melanson and 27 other registered voters in East Kingston, NH, “Shall we rescind the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Town on the second Tuesday of March. 3/5 MAJORITY BALLOT VOTE REQUIRED

This article would result in no increase in the amount to be raised by taxation.

Board members noted that a number of 55+ community residents go south for the winter and that passage of this article would deny them the ability to vote as currently these individuals vote by absentee ballot. It was suggested that this could negatively impact at least 1/3 of the town’s population.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to NOT recommend Article 17 as presented; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 3-0-0.**

**CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**

***#1. Nonpublic Session***

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to go into nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3, (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore.**

**The board was polled: Mr. Caron – yes**

**Chairman Cacciatore – yes**

**Mr. Nigrello – yes**

The board entered nonpublic session at 7:49pm.

The board re-entered public session at 8:00pm.

**MOTION: Chairman Caron motioned to seal nonpublic meeting minutes under RSA 91-A:3, on the basis that divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the public body itself; seconded by Mr. Nigrello. The motion passed 3-0-0 (2/3 vote required).**

***#2. Police Department Staffing***

Chief Jervis made an official recommendation to hire Michael LePage as a part-time patrol officer at an hourly rate of $27.11 to help the department with patrol and detail shifts.

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to accept the recommendation and hire Michael LePage as a part-time office at the rate of $27.11 per hour; seconded by Chairman Caron. The motion passed 2-1-0 (Vice Chair Cacciatore opposed).**

With no other business before the board,

**MOTION: Mr. Nigrello motioned to adjourn; seconded by Vice Chair Cacciatore. The motion passed 3-0-0 and the meeting ended at 8:02pm.**

Minutes prepared by Catherine Belcher.

Approved on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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| Joseph Cacciatore |  | Robert A. Caron |  | Robert L. Nigrello |